Alberta Economy

indicators at a glance

April 19, 2013

Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

In 2011, Alberta's real GDP advanced 5.1%, the strongest growth among the provinces and the largest gain since 2006. Real GDP growth was 4.0% in 2010. Nationally, real GDP rose 2.6% in 2011, lower than the 3.2% recorded in 2010.

Population

As of January 1st, 2012, Alberta's population was estimated at 3,931,341, a 3.0% increase from a year earlier. Nationally, population grew by 1.1% over the same period to reach 35,056,064.

Migration

In the fourth quarter of 2012, Alberta welcomed 11,533 net interprovincial migrants and 6,296 net international migrants. However, the province lost 1,133 non-permanent residents.

Employment[1]

Alberta lost 11,300 jobs in March. Employment was up 1.7% over March 2012. Nationally, employment decreased by 54,400 jobs in March, but is up 1.2% from March 2012.

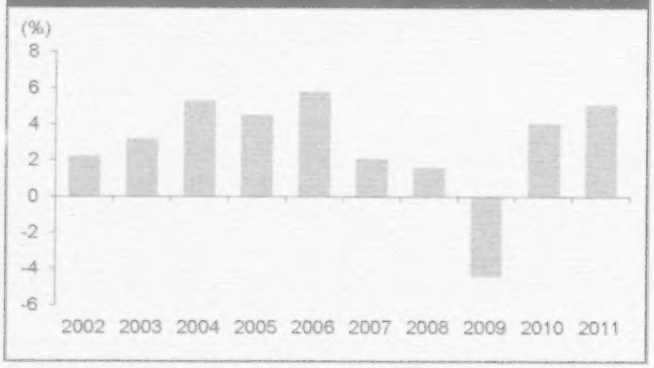
Unemployment[1]

The unemployment rate was 4.8% in March, up from 4.5% in February. Nationally, the unemployment rate increased to 7.2% in March from 7.0% in February.

Rigs Drilling

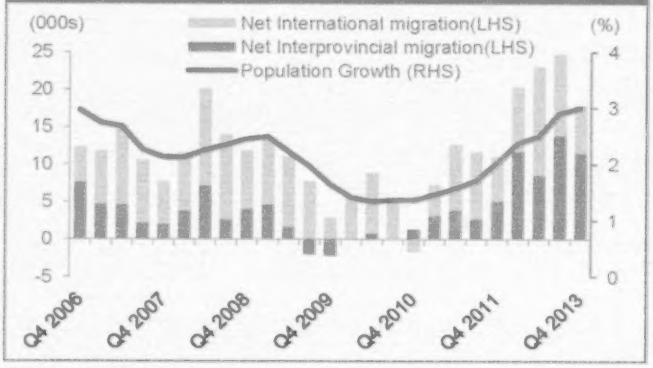
The average number of rigs drilling in Alberta was 306 in March, down 9.4% year-over-year. Nationally, rigs drilling rose 11.5% year-over-year to 496.

Real GDP
(Annual, year-over-year % change)



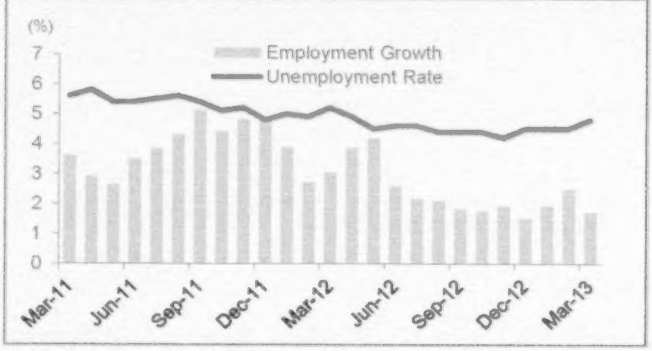
Source: Statistics Canada; Note: 2007-2011 GDP by expenditure estimates have been revised as of November 19. Historical estimates prior to 2007 will not be released until summer 2013.

Demographics
(Quarterly, population is year-over-year % change)



Source: Statistics Canada

Labour Market
(Monthly, employment is year-over-year % change)



Source: Statistics Canada

NEW: Inflation

Alberta's CPI inflation was 1.2% in March, up from 0.9% in February. Nationally, the inflation rate was 1.0% in March, down slightly from 1.2% in February.

Average Weekly Earnings[1]

In January, average weekly earnings in Alberta were $1,090.33, down 0.4% from December, but up 3.6% from the same month last year. Nationally, average weekly earnings were $908, up 2.7% year-over-year.

Retail Trade[1]

Alberta retail sales were $5.8 billion in January, up 1.3% from December, and 2.9% higher than the same month a year ago. Nationally, retail sales increased 1.0% in January, but were 0.1% lower than the same month last year.

Housing Starts

Alberta housing starts were 34,900 (seasonally adjusted at annual rate) in March, 1.1% below the previous month and 1.4% below the same month last year. Housing starts have averaged 33.700 in Q1 2013 and YTD is 8.1%.

New Housing Price Index (NHPI)

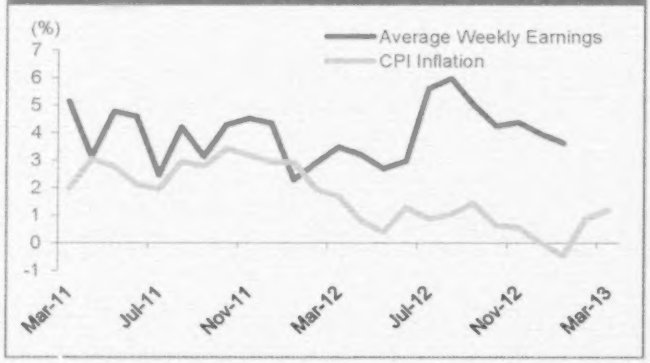
The new housing price index posts the largest y/y gain in almost 5 years (2.6%). The new high was led by growth in Calgary (4.3%), while Edmonton remained relatively flat (1.0%). Builders in Calgary reported that increases in material and labour costs were the main reason for higher prices.

Building Permits[1]

The value of building permits recovered from last month's dip and ended February at $1.4 billion; posting 20.9% y/y growth. Commercial permits were the major driver behind the numbers, with the sub-sector seeing 61.7% y/y returns.

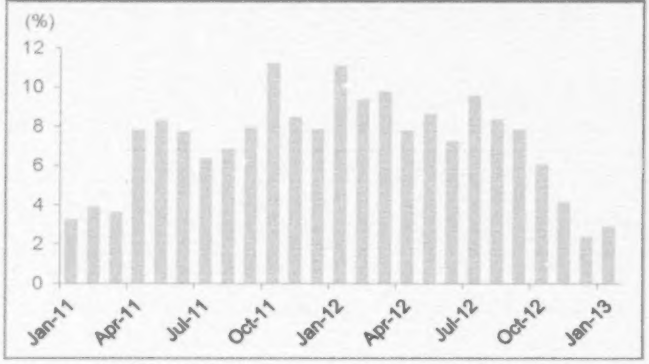
[1] Seasonally adjusted

Inflation and Earnings
(Monthly, CPI and AWE are year-over-year % change)



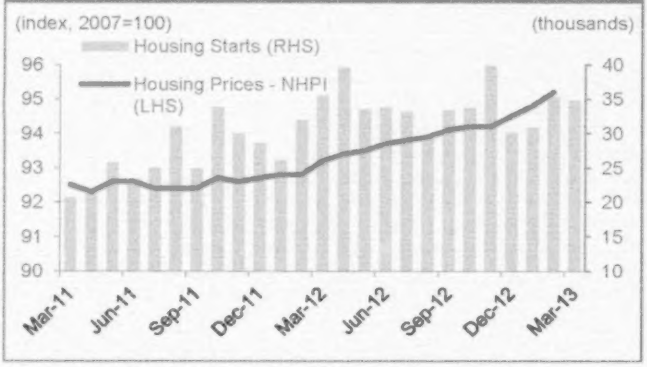
Source: Statistics Canada

Retail Sales
(Monthly, year-over-year % change)



Source: Statistics Canada

Housing Market
(Monthly)



Source: CMHC and Statistics Canada

	2012–13 Actual	2013–14 YTD	Latest
WTI Oil ($US/bbl)	$92.07	$92.39	$87.73 (April 18)
Natural Gas (AECO, $C/GJ)	$2.28 (April - Feb)	N/A	$2.69 (February)